Department of Agriculture has constituted Special Squads raid the premises of seed producers, processing plants and packing units, which in June, 2005 has seized 272.53 Qtls, of Bt. Cotton spurious seeds and 49 persons were arrested under Section IPC 420. Stop sale notices were issued for detention of stocks of Bt. Cotton hybrids NCS-145 in the state because of complaints about poor germination.

The Governemnt of Karnataka has also noticed sporadic cases of spurious Bt. Cotton seeds in the State. In order to curb the illegal Bt. Cotton seeds in the State, the Department of Agriculture has constituted Task Force to take up surprise visits to all the Seed Dealers as well as premises of Seed Producing Agencies for drawing the seed samples for quality analysis. The Department has also seized 1100 packets of fake Bt. Seeds and spurious Bt. Cotton seed supplier has been arrested and a case filed against him.

Shortfall in agricultural growth

492. SHRI C. RAMCHANDRAIAH:
SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether these has been a shorfall in agricultural growth in the country during Eighth and Ninth Plans and the three years of the Tenth Five Year Plan:

(b) if so, the details thereof:

(c) whether mid-term appraisal of the Tenth Five year Plan has also expressed concern on the stagnated rate of agricultural growth; and

(d) if so the action proposed by Government to boosts up the growth rate in the agriculture sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The annual average growth rates of agriculture including the allied sectors of forestry, logging and fishing during the Eighth and Ninth Five Plans, and the first three years of the Tenth Five year Plan are shown below:—

Eighth Plan: 4.7% against the targeted growth rate of 3.1%
Ninth Plan: 2.1% against the targeted growth rate of 3.9%
First three years of the Tenth Plan: 1.2% against the targeted growth rate of 4.0%

The shortfall in achievement during the Ninth Plan as well as the first three years of the Tenth Plan (2002-05) was due to weather related shock caused mostly by deficiency in rainfall. In the absence of an increase in irrigated area through substantial step up in public investment the capacity of the agriculture sector to withstand such shocks gets eroded. Successive Five year Plans have witnessed a steady decline in public investment in real terms (at 1993- 94 prices) in agriculture which aggravated the problems arising for weather related shocks.

(c) The mid-term Appraisal of the Tenth plan has underscored the fact that agricultural diversification has to be a major element in the strategy for accelerating agricultural growth which calls for action on several fronts:—

- Diversification to be area/region oriented implying focus on agro climatic region.
- Shift of land from cereals to non-cereals(increasing both farm incomes and employment) coupled with increase productivity in cereals to ensure adequate per capita availability.
- Shift to horticultural crops to be supported by marketing arrangement including private sector involvement in marketing encouragement of downstream food processing and research linked to market requirements.

(d) Keeping in view the importance of Agriculture in the economy, the Union Budget 2005-06 has provided increased outlays in areas like horticulture and irrigation including micro irrigation. The Budget has provided Rs. 630 crore in 2005-06 for the National Horticulture Mission which will ensure end to end approach having backward and forward linkages covering research production post harvest management processing and marketing under one umbrella in an integrated manner. The Budget has provided Rs. 4800 crore for the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme for 2005-06 compared with Rs.2800 crore in 2004-05. With a view to improving water use efficiency in Indian agriculture, the Budget has provided for Rs. 400 crore for promoting mico irrigation in 2005-06. Since the flow of credit is important in accelerating the pace of investment in agriculture, the disbursement of agricultural credit is

proposed to be stepped up by 30 per cent in 2005-06 over the credit disbursement of Rs.1,15,243/- crore in 2004-05, which exceeded the credit disbursement of Rs. 86,981 crore made in 2003-04 by 32 per cent. Cumulatively the measures sustained on a progressive basis are expected to lead to a reversal of deceleration in agricultural growth. Simultaneously since agriculture is a state subjects, states will have to increase their budgetary outlays on agriculture.

Production of foodgrains

†493. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whather it is a fact that the production of foodgrains in the current year is apprehended to dcerease in comparison to the production of the same during the last years;

(b) if so, the efforts being made to meet the shortage of foodgrains;

(c) how Government propose to compensate the losses suffered by farmers; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to prevent recurrence of shortage of foodgrains in future?

THE MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) The behaviour of monsoon was erratic in the month of june 2005 and at the All India level the cummulative rainfall from 1st june to 29th June was 20% less than the normal. However, the monsoon revived subsequently and the cumulative rain fall from 1st june to 20th July 2005 and at the All India level was 349.5 millimeter equal to normal rainfall. Cumulative rainfall was excess/ normal in 29 Meteorlogical Sub-Division (MSD) out of the 36 MSDs in the country.

The delayed onset of south -west monsoon has affected sowing activities. As per the reports considered by the Crop Wheather Watch Group of the Ministry of agriculture in its meeting held on 25.07.2005, the status of sowing of crops in Kharif 2005-06 as compared to the corresponding period of 2004-05 is as follows:—

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.